

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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US ARMY LIAISON GROUP NAMFI, SOUDA BAY, CRETE

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JOINT EMBASSY AND CCOG MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR, GR
SUBJECT: INCIDENT BETWEEN U.S. FORCES AND LOCAL RESIDENTS ON
CRETE

1. AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT OCCURRED LATE IN THE EVENING OF
JUNE 21 IN THE PORT AREA OF HANIA, CRETE, INVOLVING MEMBERS
OF THE U.S. FORCES STATIONED IN GERMANY BUT UNDERGOING TRAINING
AT THE NEARBY NATO MISSILE FIRING INSTALLATION (NAMFI).

2. THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE INCIDENT BETWEEN THE MORE
THAN A DOZEN AMERICAN TRANSIT MILITARY PERSONNEL AND SEVERAL
HUNDRED OF THE LOCAL POPULANCE ARE NOT AT ALL CLEAR. APPARENTLY,
HOWEVER, THE GREEKS WERE AROUSED BY ALLEGATIONS THAT THE
AMERICANS, WHO WERE EATING OUTDOORS AT A RESTAURANT NEAR THE PORT
AREA, MADE (UNSPECIFIED) IMPROPER ADVANCES TO A GREEK GIRL.
AN ANGRY CROWD GATHERED, THE AMERICANS ENTERED THE RESTAURANT TO
AVOID HARM, AND THE CROWD BEGAN TO THROW CHAIRS AND STONES,
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DOING SOME PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO THE RESTAURANT. THE AUTHORITIES
ARRIVED, EVENTUALLY QUELLED THE TURMOIL AND DISPERSED THE CROWD.
THE AMERICANS WERE TAKEN BACK UNHARMED TO THEIR QUARTERS AT
THE NAMFI RANGE.

3. THE GREEK AUTHORITIES OPENED A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION,
BUT NO CHARGES HAVE BEEN PRESSED YET AGAINST EITHER AMERICANS

OR GREEKS SINCE NO ONE HAS BEEN WILLING TO STEP FORWARD TO TESTIFY. FURTHERMORE, THE GREEK GIRL WHO WAS THE ALLEGED VICTIM OF THE "IMPROPER ADVANCES," HAS FAILED TO MATERIALIZE. ALL THE AMERICAN TROOPS WERE ALLOWED TO RETURN THIS MORNING (JUNE 24) TO THEIR PARENT UNIT IN GERMANY EXCEPT ONE INDIVIDUAL WHOM THE GREEK INVESTIGATING OFFICIAL WISHES TO QUESTION FURTHER. THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE ALSO CONCERNED WITH WHO WILL PAY THE DAMAGES TO THE RESTAURANT. THE PORT OF HANIA HAS BEEN PLACED OFF LIMITS TO U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL AT NAMFI.

4. THE ATHENS PRESS BY AND LARGE CARRIED THE STORY AS SECONDARY MATERIAL, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS GAVE IT BANNER HEADLINE TREATMENT. IN SPITE OF THE LACK OF FACTS, THE REPORTING WAS GENERALLY INVENTIVE, WITH SOME ACCOUNTS MORE LURID THAN OTHERS.

5. COMMENT: THIS AND OTHER SUCH INCIDENTS (E.G. THE FLAG INCIDENT AT IRAKLION A FEW MONTHS AGO) ARE MOST UNFORTUNATE. NO MATTER WHERE THE FAULT LIES, THEY PROVIDE AMMUNITION FOR SENSATIONAL PRESS TREATMENT AND TO THOSE OPPOSED TO THE U.S. PRESENCE IN GREECE. IN THIS CONNECTION, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS TODAY, THE MAYOR OF HANIA HAS BEEN MAKING NOISY ANTI-AMERICAN STATEMENTS, DREDGING UP PAST INCIDENTS ON CRETE INVOLVING U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL.

KUBISCH

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